Division for the Visually Impaired
Unified English Braille Plan
Public Meeting Minutes
Edgehill Training Center
43 S. DuPont Highway
Dover, DE 19901
May 24, 2018 4:00pm

Attendees:

Erin Weaver, Division for the Visually Impaired, Matthew Tseronis, Division for the Visually Impaired, Holly Jackson, Division for the Visually Impaired, Elisha Jenkins, Division for the Visually Impaired, Sara Nehra, Spanish Interpreter Ruth Fisher, Sign Language Interpreter, Court Reporter, Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Department of Education, Susan Veenema, Department of Education, Lloyd Schmitz, Public.

Historical Provision of Braille Materials and Preparation

In 2012, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) adopted Unified English Braille (UEB) as an official braille code to replace English Braille American Edition (EBAE) in the United States. The implementation date for UEB in the United States as established by BANA was January 4, 2016. BANA developed an implementation timeline that includes four phases. BANA's implementation plan is as follows:

- 2013 Information Year: Development and dissemination of UEB information and gathering of constituent input
- 2014 Infrastructure Year: Procurement and production of UEB braille materials and development of training materials
- 2015 Instructional Year: Readers, producers and educators will become proficient in UEB
- 2016 Implementation Year: All new transcriptions will be produced in UEB. Educators will teach the UEB code. Devices and software will fully and accurately incorporate UEB

Unified English Braille (UEB) Defined

Unified English Braille (UEB) is the revised braille code used internationally for transcribing braille in the English language. UEB is based on the previous

international literary braille code, English Braille American Edition (EBAE), with the same alphabet and most of the same contractions and punctuation. UEB is a complete braille code encompassing revisions and extensions to EBAE that include symbols for technical materials (e.g. science, technology, engineering and mathematics). UEB is designed to be less ambiguous, with fewer exceptions and rules. Literary materials transcribed in UEB are easily read by most braille readers who are familiar with EBAE. Currently, UEB is an official braille code in eight English-speaking countries, including the United States.

Unified English Braille 2014-Present

School Year 2014/15- Procurement and production of UEB Braille materials and development of training materials

School Year 2015/16-

- Production team trained in UEB literary braille;
- State Assessments were produced in EBAE and Nemeth;

School Year 2016/17-

- All new transcriptions were produced in UEB
- Production team were certified in literary UEB
- Educator professional development in the UEB code.
- Devices and software fully incorporated UEB
- Statewide assessments were produced in EBAE and Nemeth;
- Students introduced to UEB
- UEB literary materials provided for students whose Individualized Education Program specifically designated UEB

School Year 2017/18-

- Materials produced in UEB Literary and Nemeth Math
- UEB Math materials produced for students whose Individualized Education Program specifically designating UEB.
- Statewide Assessments were produced in UEB literary and Nemeth unless designated on student's IEP for UEB Math
- Production team received professional development on accessible document creation and remediation

- Educators received professional development on UEB Math and Technical, accessible notetakers, and braille translation software tools
- Students continued to be introduced and instructed in literary and math UEB

UEB Plan Highlights/ Timeline

Producers/Creators/Transcribers are certified in UEB. Some are also certified in Nemeth and Music braille as needed for individual students.

Students are progressing well with the transition to UEB.

The type of braille used by students is determined by their IEP. Resources will be posted on DVI website under Publications/Forms

Resources will be added to DVI Resource Guide as well.

The UEB transition process will occur gradually over several years, with the anticipated completion of the full transition to UEB for braille instruction and the transcription of instructional materials and statewide assessments by the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Throughout the transition period, some instructional materials and statewide assessment will continue to be available in EBAE and Nemeth Code to address individual student needs, as determined appropriate by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team.

School Year 2018-19:

- Materials produced in UEB Literary and Nemeth Math
- UEB Math materials will be produced for students whose Individualized Education Program specifically designate UEB.
- Statewide Assessments will be produced in UEB literary and Nemeth unless designated on student's IEP for UEB Math
- Production team will continue to receive professional development on accessible document creation and remediation
- Educators will receive professional development on UEB Math and Technical
- Students will be receive UEB Math instruction
- Students will be introduced to UEB science and technical subjects

School Year 2019-20:

- Materials produced in UEB literary, Math and technical
- Statewide Assessments will be produced in UEB literary, math, and technical
- Students will be receive UEB science and technical instruction

Public Comments:

Lloyd Schmitz asked if updates to the UEB Plan will be on the website. Response: Yes, the UEB information and resources will be posted on DVI's website.

Lloyd Schmitz asked about the production of UEB in the 2016/2017 school year. Response: Yes, the Division for the Visually Impaired produced materials in UEB in that time period.

Lloyd Schmitz would like to know how many students are receiving UEB versus EBAE.

Lloyd Schmitz questioned what training DVI is providing for the adult population with regards to UEB. Response: If adults request training in the new UEB, the case workers in ILS provide the training and DVI honors requests to their adult population in both UEB and EBAE, depending on what each individual consumer requests. Adults primarily learn braille through Hadley courses in conjunction with their Vision Rehabilitation Therapist.

Maryann Mieczkowski (DOE) asked if DVI would be producing new materials in UEB or EBAE for adults. Response: The adult population would be urged to learn UEB so that they would be ready for the transition, however it is ultimately the adult consumer who decides for themselves.

Maryann Mieczkowski (DOE) questioned UEB math for the IEP. Response: DVI's teachers have been trained in UEB and this school year teachers taught the UEB code. The IEP will state what type of braille the student needs. The Material Center is ready and able to provide UEB or EBAE at any time during the school year. DVI teachers have been introducing and teaching the UEB literary code this school year.

Maryann Mieczkowski (DOE) questioned what the monitoring process would look like. Response: A combination of monitoring progress reports, feedback from students and parents, and grades will be used. Maryann Mieczkowski (DOE) asked if the monitoring would be formal or informal. Response: Monitoring would be informal.